

**YoungStar Immediate Training and
Technical Assistance Report
Submitted to
Wisconsin's Joint Finance Committee
on
March 1, 2011**



On June 23, 2010, the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) approved YoungStar, Wisconsin's Quality Rating and Improvement System. The Department has received around 1,268 YoungStar applications from providers and the YoungStar website has had over 8,000 individual hits on the applications.

In approving YoungStar, JFC reallocated \$1.5 million in Wisconsin Shares savings to provide immediate training and technical assistance for child care providers that are located in 12 counties. The funding was to be used to support training and technical assistance for child care

providers in the 10 counties that had the greatest total number of Wisconsin Shares providers (Milwaukee, Dane, Racine, Kenosha, Marathon, Waukesha, La Crosse, Rock, Eau Claire and Wood) and in the two counties that have a total population under 17,000 and that have the highest ratios of Wisconsin Shares provided to the total number of licensed and certified child care providers located in the county (Iron and Washburn).

JFC also directed the Department to report the outcomes of the expanded training and technical assistance efforts by March 1, 2011.

I. Overview

The Department contracted with the Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA), the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA), and various UW campuses and technical colleges to provide the increased training and technical assistance. A few highlights include:

- 7,325 providers participated in training to earn credit and non-credit based training in all YoungStar key areas.
 - SFTA and WECA credit and non-credit based instruction:
 - 6,372 participants statewide
 - 5,790 in the target counties
 - Wisconsin Technical College System and the UW System Campuses credit-based instruction was made available to:
 - 953 participants statewide
 - 832 in the target counties
- Technical assistance:
 - On-site assistance to an additional 1,396 programs through the Child and Adult Food Care Program;
 - Intensive on-site support to 101 family and group child care programs;
 - Intensive professional development planning consulting was provided to child care programs through 68 sessions.
- Resources were made available to support the design of new online courses in key areas such as inclusion of children with disabilities.

This reallocation of resources has made a significant impact on the availability of coursework related to preparing child care programs to improve quality and become better prepared to participate in YoungStar. These dollars resulted in the following overall outcomes:

- Quantifiable improvements in quality of child care environments as validated by Early Childhood Environmental Rating Score increases.
- Development of program-specific quality improvement plans with clear steps identified to improve child care quality.
- Increased knowledge obtained by child care providers.

II. Training – Supporting Families Together Association and Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

The table below shows the breakdown of training participants in the 12 target counties. Additionally, training partners held webinars to provide YoungStar overview and environment and curriculum so that it was available statewide. To date, WECA and SFTA have trained 5,790 participants in the target counties through 210 training sessions. There were 582 participants in other counties for a total of 6,372 participants.

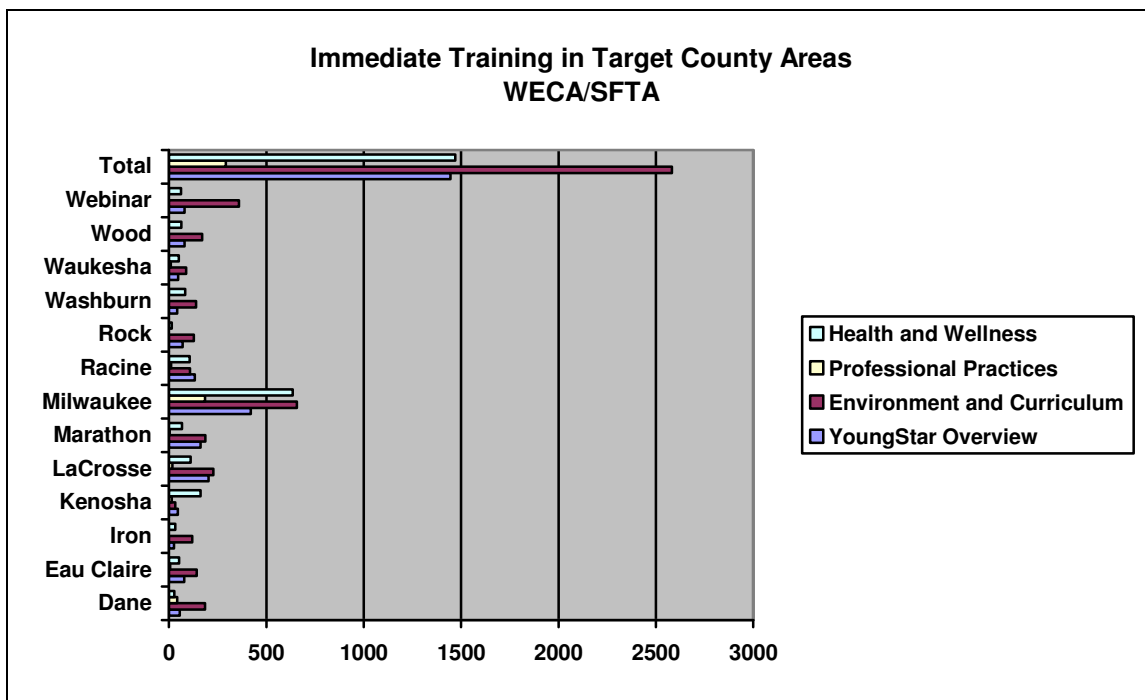
YoungStar training delivery content is sorted into the following content categories:

YoungStar Overview: 1,446 target county participants (1,928 including all participants) = 53 trainings

Environment and Curriculum: 2,582 target county participants (2,648 including all participants) = 80 trainings

Professional Practices: 291 target county participants (308 including all participants) = 18 trainings

Health and Wellness: 1,471 target county participants (1,488 including all participants) = 59 trainings



Details of YoungStar Training Opportunities: July 1 – December 31, 2010

- ◆ WECA has provided trainings in YoungStar overview, professional practices/staff benefits, provider portfolio development, accreditation training, and health and wellness training opportunities. WECA also has been delivering training and technical assistance through food program participation visits and has also developed a professional development planning tool available on their website that can be used by staff to identify ongoing professional development needs. The tool includes an opportunity to have the staff person contact WECA directly to have one-on-one phone consultation.
- ◆ Using best practices for adult education delivery, SFTA has administered the following types of training:
 - **YoungStar Overviews:** These trainings give providers an overview of the YoungStar program basic principles and offer providers an opportunity to ask questions and have questions answered.

- **Wisconsin Pyramid Model Work:** These trainings focus on intentional teaching of social skills and emotional competencies so that providers of early care and education can help children develop the capacity to form close and secure adult and peer relationships; experience, regulate, and express emotions in appropriate ways; and explore the environment and learn.
- **Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) Training and Walk-Throughs:** These trainings help providers to specify developmental expectations for children from birth through entrance to first grade. Tools such as these help providers continue to achieve success and build comfort and reassurance about what quality improvement rating systems will bring for them.
- **Environmental rating work:** These focus on the role of rating scales in quality improvement. Scoring basics and commonly low scoring items will be discussed.

In addition to training delivered face-to-face, SFTA delivered a Webinar on Child Portfolio Development: This training, which was held on November 4, 2010 attended virtually by over 300 participants in ten sites, was designed to help programs that were ready, learn to develop child portfolios. Participants were able to identify three effective approaches to portfolio development and to articulate the major steps needed to implement child portfolio development in their programs. The goals and objectives of this webinar were to learn the value of portfolios as a way to document child progress, plan for individualized learning, and share meaningful information with parents.

II.B Training and Technical Assistance through Institutions of Higher Education

Higher levels of provider education are consistently shown to have a positive effect on the delivery of early care and education. In Wisconsin, many providers want to take credit-based coursework so that they can move up in The Registry Career Levels and have their educational qualifications counted within YoungStar levels. Access to credit-based training is becoming more available and accessible across the state in non-traditional formats.

Support allowed these institutions of higher education provided training to 953 individuals since September. Online courses are currently offered at UW-Milwaukee, Waukesha County Technical College, and Gateway Technical College. UW-Whitewater is working to create online credit-based courses.

The following courses have been or are being developed for one to three credits:

- ◆ **Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards:** Development of course offerings in non-traditional formats, and also in coordination with Practicum One
Offered at: UW Stout, Gateway Technical College, Blackhawk Technical College, MidState Technical College and Chippewa Valley Technical College – delivered for one credit
- ◆ **Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood Settings:** Development of course offerings in “Children with Differing Abilities”. 3 credits
Offered at: Waukesha County Technical College, Gateway Technical College, MidState Technical College. Additionally, UW-Whitewater and Waukesha County Technical College are collaborating to offer this course online
- ◆ **Social Emotional Foundations** - coursework – 3 credits
offered at: Blackhawk Technical College

- ♦ **Early Childhood Foundations** (includes developmentally appropriate practices, developmental continuum, etc.) 3 credits
Offered at: Waukesha County Technical College, Chippewa Valley Technical College, UW-Milwaukee
- ♦ **Curriculum Planning/Portfolio Development**
Offered at: UW-Whitewater, Blackhawk Technical College, Chippewa Valley Technical College – 1-3 credits
- ♦ **Child Health and Well Being** (examples include, “Health, Safety and Nutrition”)
Offered at: Waukesha County Technical College, Chippewa Valley Technical College, Gateway Technical College and MidState Technical College – 3 credits
- ♦ **Professional Practices**
Offered at: UW-Stout – 3 credits
- ♦ **Credit for Prior Learning**
Offered at: Wisconsin Technical College System – credit received based on competencies demonstrated
- ♦ ***New Course Developed*** – Child Driven Curriculum from Design to Documentation
Offered both on-line and in-person at UW-Whitewater – 3 credits

Non-credit based opportunities:

- ♦ **Program Administration Scale/Business Administration Scale (PAS/BAS)**
Offered at: UW-Milwaukee
- ♦ **Mentoring/Coaching Support**
Offered at: UW-Madison Waisman Center to one Dane County child care provider
- ♦ **Dual Language Learners**
Institutions of higher education, state agencies and stakeholders met to discuss the needs of Dual Language Learners. To facilitate this, UW-Madison’s Waisman Center convened over 40 early childhood faculty from the Wisconsin Technical College System, the University of Wisconsin System, and Wisconsin Private Colleges, along with other invested stakeholders to identify the resources and assets available in Wisconsin to support and prepare early Childhood personnel to provide linguistically and culturally-responsive and developmentally-appropriate care for young children who are dual language learners.

Immediate YoungStar Training Participation through Higher Education:

Early Childhood Development and Developmentally Appropriate Practices: 347

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities: 83

Environment and Curriculum and Professional Practices: 373

Health and Wellness: 132

Credit for Prior Learning: 18

Totals: 953 participants were reached through 84 training opportunities as of December 31, 2010; 832 training participants participated in 80 trainings in the target counties.

We are pleased to see that many of the courses supported by YoungStar will be offered in future semesters. In addition to the UW-Whitewater course that will be offered in the spring, examples of future coursework include:

UW-Milwaukee has plans to:

- Present an additional PAS workshop at the WCCAA Annual Conference
- Offer 2 online child care teacher courses, one beginning 1/24 and the other beginning 2/21. We will be offering a 3rd course later in March.

Blackhawk Technical College intends to continue offering all of the coursework supported through YoungStar including:

- Health and well-being, Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standard and Curriculum Planning

Gateway Technical College was able to add additional offerings to support the YoungStar legislation that were not supported through the grant but are continuing this semester, and into the fall 2011 and spring 2012. These include:

- Infant/Toddler Development, Health and Safety, Child Development and related coursework that will support the child care workforce

UW-Stout will be:

- Offering Evidence-Based Methods in Early Childhood both in person and on-line courses in the fall and summer of 2011.
- Considering developing another 1 credit course that would focus on children's progress, documentation and use of portfolios to document progress.

III. Technical Assistance

Targeted training and technical assistance was delivered to support quality improvement in child care programs. These trainings helped to prepare child care programs for YoungStar.

On-site technical assistance was provided to more than 2,400 early care professionals through contracts with Supporting Families Together Association, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association and the UW Waisman Center. These services included:

- SFTA delivered intensive services using the Together Quality Grows model to 50 group child care programs and 50 family programs. The UW Waisman Center provided an intensive mentoring program to a child care program in Dane County.
- WECA provided on-site technical assistance to child care programs about the Child and Adult Food Care Program provided by the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association through visits to 1,396 programs.

- WECA also offered 68 sessions that focused on professional development planning and counseling also offered by the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association.

Specifics of each of these services are detailed below.

III.A On-site Technical Assistance – Supporting Families Together Association

Recruitment took place to select programs to participate in the **YoungStar/Together Quality Grows** quality indicator rating observation and targeted technical assistance project. A total of 50 licensed group centers and 50 licensed family/certified child care providers voluntarily participated during the time frame of July 1 through December 31, 2010. This technical assistance opportunity was made available through local child care resource and referral service delivery, utilizing the strengths of valid and reliable rating observers.

Through on-site technical consultation, over 700 site visits were completed, with an average of 7 visits per site. Additional off-site support was provided, with an average of 9 hours available per program. Of the 100 programs participating in these rating observation and technical assistance opportunities through YoungStar, 31 additional programs are demonstrating a commitment to credit based education through participation in the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarship program (19 group centers and 12 family programs with a total of 49 teachers/providers receiving scholarship support).

- Over 4,800 children have been served by these 100 volunteer programs.
- 53% of these children served have an authorization for the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy.
- 26% of the children served in these 100 participating programs are children of color.

Counties targeted, types of programs and types of services are detailed in the following chart.

Target County	Group	Family	Outcome
Milwaukee	21 Group	18 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 Group Centers = 220 on-site visits 18 Family Programs = 103 on-site visits 1,589 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Racine	2 Group	3 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Group Centers = 16 on-site visits 3 Family Programs = 21 on-site visits 184 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Kenosha	1 Group	2 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Group Center = 9 on-site visits 2 Family Programs = 12 on-site visits 99 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Waukesha	3 Group	1 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Group Centers = 22 on-site visits 1 Family Program = 6 on-site visits 201 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Rock	2 Group	2 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Group Centers = 13 on-site visits 2 Family Programs = 10 on-site visits 79.5 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Dane	8 Group	9 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 Group Centers = 66 on-site visits 9 Family Programs = 51 on-site Visits Total of 344 Targeted Technical Assistance Hours
Wood	2 Group	2 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Group Centers = 10 on-site visits 2 Family Programs = 10 on-site visits 79.5 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Marathon	3 Group	3 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 Group Centers = 36 on-site visits 3 Family Programs = 15 on-site visits 134.5 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Eau Claire	2 Group	2 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Group Centers = 15 on-site visits 2 Family Programs = 17 on-site visits 65 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
La Crosse	5 Group	6 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 Group Centers = 15 on-site visits 6 Family Programs = 28 on-site visits 107 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers
Iron		1 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Family Program = 7 on-site visits 13.5 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting this provider
Washburn	1 Group	1 Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Group Center = 7 on-site visits 1 Family Program = 7 on-site visits 27 technical consultant hours spent on-site coaching and supporting providers

Quality Improvement Plans

Participating child care programs developed quality improvement plans that identified areas for change, and designated a time line for quality improvement efforts. Technical consultants provided targeted technical assistance, based on the individualized needs of a program. Examples of areas and/or indicators that have been targeted for quality enhancement include:

development of quality improvement plan/change plan targeting specific learning centers within the child care program, environment enhancement, organization, creation of daily schedule, hand washing practices, movement/physical activities, math and science area materials, sand/water table, social emotional training, and overall safety.

Outcomes

Immediate on-site training and technical assistance demonstrated that concrete supports to group and family child care can yield significant improvements in quality in a short time frame. From teacher/caregiver enthusiasm about training and technical assistance to measurable results in quality indicators that directly impact children, the conclusions demonstrate that this effort in the 12 targeted counties was a wise investment of resources. The following tables show the impact of the targeted technical assistance supports as measured by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale.

Average Group Center Pre- and Post-TA Aggregate Program Observation Score

	Pre	Post	Change
Space and Furnishings	3.43	4.4	+ 0.97
Personal Care Routines	2.56	3.55	+ 0.99
Listening and Talking	3.51	4.88	+1.37
Activities	2.72	4.09	+1.37
Interaction	4.16	5.16	+1.00
Program Structure	3.40	4.53	+1.13
Overall Score	3.29	4.35	+1.06

The greatest improvements in quality across all 12 participating counties were directly related to listening and talking and age appropriate activities.

Average Family Child Care Pre and Post TA Aggregate Provider Observation Score

	Pre	Post	Change
Space and Furnishings	3.43	4.89	+1.46
Personal Care Routines	2.75	3.93	+1.18
Listening and Talking	4.01	4.99	+0.98
Activities	2.61	4.14	+1.53
Interaction	4.70	5.52	+0.82
Program Structure	3.79	5.23	+1.44
Overall Score	3.42	4.7	+1.28

The greatest improvements in quality across all 12 participating counties were directly related to activities. Programs participating in intensive supports pre-YoungStar were more likely to engage children in developmentally appropriate activities.

III.B Technical Assistance through Wisconsin Early Childhood Association

WECA has provided targeted technical assistance through Child and Adult Care Food Program consultants to 1,396 programs; of those programs 82% or 1,147, provided care to programs that serve Wisconsin Shares families. During these visits, over 75% of providers indicated that the on-site YoungStar information was helpful and that they now know a fair amount of information about YoungStar.

The following chart illustrates the technical assistance that was provided in the target counties during Child and Adult Care Food Program consultations:

Target County	Programs Visited	Specifics
Dane	258	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visits averaged 20 minutes• Over 75% of programs visited indicate that the on-site YoungStar information is helpful• Over 75% of programs visited indicate that they now know a fair amount of information about YoungStar• Nearly 70% of programs visited indicated they are now better prepared to meet YoungStar requirements• In addition to onsite TA, many programs indicate that they are also attending YoungStar overviews
Eau Claire	57	
Iron	68	
LaCrosse	4	
Kenosha	33	
Marathon	125	
Milwaukee	647	
Racine	47	
Rock	55	
Washburn	13	
Waukesha	19	
Wood	70	
Total On-site Visits	1,396	

A second area of consultation WECA provided was around professional development planning and counseling. A total of 68 counseling sessions were provided to child care providers and programs by professional development counselors at WECA. These sessions covered professional planning including training competencies of lead teaching staff and their future professional development goals, including completion of credit, credentials, and degrees, as well as content training such as Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards, Wisconsin Pyramid Model, Strengthening Families, Inclusive Practices, and Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Training delivery. Access is available statewide to the child care workforce via the online planning tool available at:

http://www.wecanaeyc.org/advocacy/index.php?category_id=3267&subcategory_id=7717.

Information regarding the planning tool website address is being shared with the child care workforce. The planning tool is available online as a fillable form and can be submitted to WECA via email. Counseling services are focused on the individual needs of the child care program and/or child care director, teacher or provider. Sessions include topics such as:

- Choosing an educational pathway (credit, credential, degree)
- TEACH scholarship access, class format (traditional, online, accelerated)
- Previous coursework completions
- Credit for prior learning Experiences
- Short term and long term goals
- YoungStar points

In addition to the 68 sessions delivered, additional inquiries have been made by center directors and teaching staff to better understand what services may be available for ongoing planning. Participants that have completed the professional development counseling sessions indicate that they feel better prepared to meet the YoungStar educational requirements, and that this session was helpful in determining individual short and long term goals. Some center directors see this as an opportunity to look at the overall professional needs for the program, and the individualized needs of staffing for professional growth.

II.C Waisman Center Technical Assistance

The Waisman Early Childhood Program selected to work with a Madison-based Kindercare. Activities that occurred during this time included:

- Co-teaching
- Reflective debriefing
- Identification of critical incidents
- Brainstorming teaching strategies
- Written report of findings

Waisman staff will continue to work with the child care program and lead staff on identified strengths and challenges to improve quality.

IV. Conclusion

Feedback we have received from the training demonstrates that providers continue to need the following for quality improvement:

- ♦ Greater access to credit-based instruction closer to home. In some rural areas of Wisconsin, there are few institutions of higher education to offer credit-based instruction and when the schools do offer the courses, many times they are cancelled because of lack of enrollment. Staff at DCF and The Consortium are working with institutions of higher education to facilitate the development of more courses to cater to the providers' needs, many of which are offered online or on nights and weekends.
- ♦ Greater access to training on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model which teaches providers about the social and emotional development of children and gives them tools for supporting all children, including those with disabilities and challenging behaviors. DCF and The Consortium are working with other state partners to identify more opportunities for offering this training around the state.
- ♦ Greater access to technical assistance in Northern Wisconsin and other rural areas. Because of the vast geographic area to cover and the limited number of Technical Consultants, onsite technical assistance to providers in rural areas is a challenge. To alleviate this issue, The Consortium is in the process of hiring and training staff for each of the YoungStar regions. The contract between DCF and The Consortium requires adequate coverage for child care providers to access training, technical consultation and formal rating observations when requested in all areas of the state.

Specific feedback about courses offered and knowledge gained also provide evidence of the critical impact of these services. The following quote helps sum up the key benefits.

"I started taking classes with Gateway when I was told of the YoungStar Program and that the center I worked for wanted to qualify for a higher rating. I have now

completed the 6 credits that my employer requested. I am impressed with the quality of the classes I have taken, which were Emerging Literacy and Infant Toddler Development. In the process of acquiring these credits I have experienced a new passion for the work that I do. I am working on using the knowledge I've gained in improving the way I take care of the infants in my care. I believe that the education of the teachers is key in improving the care and the education that our children receive. As for me, at 57 I was looking forward to retiring but am now excited to continue my education in the Early Childhood Program at Gateway. Retirement will have to wait!"